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ABSTRACT

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READING ATTITUDES AND INTERESTS OF GIFTED AND TALENTED CHILDREN IN THE MIDDLE GRADES

Plan B Paper presented to
the Department of Teacher Education
and Professional Development
Central Michigan University

In Partial Fulfillment
of the Requirements for the Degree of
Master of Arts in Elementary Education

Barbara R. Link

July 1984

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ABSTRACT

The study investigated reading attitudes and interests of 30 fourth through ninth grade gifted and talented students. The data were gathered through the use of a questionnaire which included statements with Likert type scale responses, multiple-choice responses, and short answers. Methods used to analyze the data were individual item analysis, analysis of variance, and t test. Results were reported in means, standard deviations, and cumulative percentages. The major findings of the study were: gifted children have a very positive attitude toward reading; books appear to be the preferred format of reading materials; significant differences ($p<.05$) between grade levels' preferred reading topics resulted in five areas (archaeology, crafts and hobbies, music, myths and fantasies, prehistoric world); significant differences ($p<.05$) between boys' and girls' preferred reading topics resulted in four areas (comedy/jokes, poetry, science fiction, sports).

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July 1984

Table of Contents

Chapter		Page
I.	Introduction	1
	Identification of the Problem	2
	Significance of the Problem	3
II.	Analysis and Summary of Related Research and Authoritative Opinion	5
	Characteristics of Academically Gifted Learners	5
	Characteristics of Effective Reading Programs for the Gifted	8
	Research of Reading Interests and Attitudes of Gifted Children	15
	Summary of Research and Authoritative Opinion	20
III.	Hypotheses and Operational Definitions	22
	Hypotheses	22
	Operational Definitions	22
	Summary	23
IV.	Experimental Design	24
	Subjects	24
	Experimental Procedures	25
	Experimental Materials	26
	Analysis	27
	Summary	29

Chapter Page

V. Results of the Study. 30
Tests of Hypotheses 30
Major Findings. 38
Summary 38
VI. Discussion and Implications of the Study. 39
General Discussion. 39
Limitations 44
Suggestions for Further Research. 45
Concluding Statement. 46
Reference Matter
References. 48
Appendixes
A. Cover Letter for the Survey Instrument 51
B. Reading Interest Survey. 52
C. Table C-1: Grade Level Means for Topics of Reading Interest 55
D. Table D-1: Male/Female Means and Grand Means for Topics of Reading Interest. 56

List of Tables

Table — Page

1. Frequency and Mean Scores of Reading Attitude Responses. 31
2. Frequency and Percent Scores of Preferred Reading Formats 33
3. Analysis of Variance Between Grade Levels of Topics of Reading Interest 35
4. Grade Level Means of Topics of Reading Interest. 35
5. T-Test Analysis Between Male and Female Subjects of Topics of Reading Interest. 37
6. Male and Female Means of Topics of Reading Interest. 37

CHAPTER I

Introduction

Schools exist primarily for the purpose of helping young people learn. In every learning situation, from a spontaneous one-to-one encounter with new information to the most complex program, the challenge of the educator is to foster any condition or element which enhances that learning process.

American schools continue to face the challenge of meeting the needs of the individual learner. Earlier in this country's history schools emphasized the importance of students' effective citizenship and future vocational successes. Based on particular national concerns of the time (e.g., war, the Great Depression, the space challenge), the thrust of American education has shifted from one area of concern to another. In this century the federal government has recognized that, as citizens, students are entitled to their constitutional liberties as individual persons.

For any society to succeed it must strive to develop its greatest resource, namely individuals who function as useful, productive members of society. To most successfully develop this human potential, educational professionals must seek to address the needs of individual learners. In order to achieve optimal success one must determine the strengths and needs of students and strive to create learning experiences which guide students from where they

are to the outer limits of their potential. This process involves the atypical student as well as the average student. Schools and legislatures have long realized the need for attending to the remedial student whose learning environment requires special methods and materials. Not until later in this century has the educational community given special attention to the above-average pupil as well.

All societies must be aware of the enormous contributions of its members who may be termed in one capacity or another "gifted" or "talented". Historically, it is difficult to imagine what the present world would be like without the contributions of such geniuses as Albert Einstein, Marie Curie, or Wolfgang Mozart. As young people, these gifted individuals were guided and encouraged to develop their interests and talents in much the same way as are higher ability students today.

The lifelong learning process is one which occurs in several different modes: learning from experience, learning from what one is told by others, and learning from what others have written. Feeding the gifted and talented's inherent voracity for knowledge can be accomplished in part through the pleasurable experience of reading. It is to this challenge that this paper is addressed.

Identification of the Problem

Given what is known today about gifted children, it may be stated that reading appears to play an integral role in their development. To meet the reading needs of the gifted child, the

educational professional must be dedicated to determining the reading interests of that child and structuring the learning program accordingly. Witty (1971) has identified the problem:

> It has been shown that gifted and creative pupils have special needs which should be recognized and cared for by appropriate procedures in every subject area. Particularly in the field of reading is there a notable neglect of the gifted despite recognition of the importance of gearing instruction to individual differences and attempting to provide for the full range of ability. (p. 2)

This study will concentrate on individual reading attitudes and interests of talented and gifted children in the middle grades. Following a review of pertinent literature on gifted children and reading, the author will survey a number of gifted and talented children to obtain answers to the following general questions:

1. What are gifted children's overall attitudes toward reading?

2. What formats of reading materials are preferred by gifted children in the middle grades?

3. Do the variables of sex and grade level affect gifted children's topics of interest in reading?

Securing the answers to these inclusive questions will be the focus of this study.

Significance of the Problem

The role of the teacher of gifted and talented students includes becoming informed of their development and adept in using such child study techniques as the interest inventory (Witty, 1971). As a professional working with intermediate grade readers of varying

abilities, the author recognizes the impact which young learners' reading experiences have on their entire development. For some time the educational community has identified reading as the crux of the total educational process. Therefore, to be better qualified for the task of helping children learn, all teachers of children must strive to equip themselves with any resources and knowledge which would help them meet that task. This is an ongoing process.

Continued study of the stated reading attitudes of intermediate grade students constitutes a "promising line" of educational research (Engin, Wallbrown, & Brown, 1976, p. 309). The importance of gifted children, reading, and the intersection of the two justify attention to the problem.

CHAPTER II

Analysis and Summary of Related Research and Authoritative Opinion

A thorough investigation of the gifted's reading interests and reading attitudes involves researching the type of learners being treated as well as what has been written about their peculiar reading habits. This review of available literature will discuss the characteristics of academically gifted learners, characteristics of effective reading programs for the gifted, and findings of particular reading interests and attitudes of the gifted.

Characteristics of Academically Gifted Learners

Although very little was known about gifted children, Terman and Oden (1947) reported that in the past gifted have been regarded with a combination of esteem, wonder, and anticipation. About 1850, these children were reclassified by professionals as "neurotic, and . . . to be headed for pre-adolescent stupidity or insanity" (p. 1). The concensus was that gifted children's various stages of youth should be developed slowly and even that they should be shielded from developing their intellect. A popular myth was that many great gifted persons were stupid in childhood. Some teachers shunned the superior student who, sensing this attitude, began to feign ignorance.

The obvious lack of insight into the gifted child led to the first significant research in this field by Lewis M. Terman and his associates at Stanford University beginning in the 1920's. Following an in-depth, longitudinal study (Terman & Oden, 1947) of a large sample of gifted children, a composite portrait of the gifted was produced. Terman stated that, typically, the gifted child: (a) comes from a background which is superior culturally and educationally; (b) is in slightly better physical condition than the average child; (c) is accelerated both in grade placement and mastery of subject matter; (d) enjoys school and prefers the more difficult subjects; (e) learns to read readily, reads both a greater quantity and a superior quality of books than the average child, and is greatly self-taught from what is read; (f) has interests which are broad and acquired easily; (g) is above average in character; and (h) differs little from the nongifted child in activity interests.

A brief description of the highly above-average child has been composed by Witty (cited by Miller, 1981): a gifted and talented child is "one whose performance in a potentially valuable line of human activity is consistently remarkable" (p. 5). Witty (1971) has also provided a complete listing of characteristics of the gifted. These characteristics include: achieve best in reading and language; achieve most poorly in writing and spelling; learn to read at an early age; learn rapidly; found in all social and economic levels; and have great promise and need appropriate opportunities which are often lacking in most settings.

The U.S. Office of Education has identified the traits of superior children and the specific categories in which their talents are exhibited:

> Children capable of high performance include those with demonstrated achievement and/or potential ability in any of the following areas, simply or in combination:
>
> 1. general intellectual ability
> 2. specific academic aptitude
> 3. leadership ability
> 4. visual and performing arts
> 5. creative or productive thinking
> 6. psychomotor ability. (Miller, 1981, p. 4)

One author (Maker, 1982) has summarized the identified or potential behavioral characteristics of gifted children in four areas. In the area of learning, the gifted child: has an advanced vocabulary for his or her age; has a vast knowledge of many subjects which are recalled quickly; can grasp underlying principles and generalizations readily; is an acute observer; is an avid and sophisticated reader; and can reason logically without help. Concerning motivation, the gifted child: prefers involved study and is bored with routine work; prefers to work independently; requires little outside motiviation to complete work of interest; has a taste for adult level problems; is often staunch in beliefs; and has a high regard for morality of issues. In terms of creativity, Maker stated, the gifted child: is very curious; solves problems creatively; expresses opinion without inhibition; may take risks; is intellectually playful; exhibits a sharp sense of humor; is sensitive to emotions, beauty, and aesthetics; and is nonconforming. Where leadership is concerned,

the gifted child: is dependable and responsible; is self-confident with peers and adults; appears to be liked by classmates; generally cooperates with teachers and classmates; expresses himself or herself well; adapts easily to changes in routine; prefers social activity to solitude; often directs and dominates others; and participates in and enjoys school and athletic activities.

A description of gifted children is not exclusive of certain traits typical of nongifted children as well. A brief description of children in the intermediate grades will also describe the gifted children who are the subjects of this study. Shafer (1972) reported that during the Middle Childhood years (approximately ages six through twelve) a child experiences a push in three areas: a shift from family to peers, a physical thrust into games and work, and a mental press into adult concepts. Several thousand concepts are being formed, many based on concrete experience. Piagetian psychology views the middle years as crucial periods of moral development. The intermediate and junior high school years are ones of change and development when children are acquiring lifelong values, attitudes, and beliefs. Schools at this stage must provide for problems of the individual student, and reading should play a vital role in that process.

Characteristics of Effective Reading Programs for the Gifted

Many professionals will agree that the "ultimate goal of reading instruction is to establish permanent interest in reading"

(Witty, 1971, p. 56). Wendelin and Zinck (1983) have stated that an essential goal of reading programs is to effectively blend students and books together so that students will select reading as an independent, diversional activity. Good and Brophy (1980) reported that students who never learn to read functionally will suffer throughout school in reading and in other subjects. Smith (1982) has stated that among educators' highest goals for reading ought to be "a strengthened personal commitment to read" (p. 362).

Reading, particularly the reading of books, plays a vital role in enabling all children to become independent learners (Baskin & Harris, 1980):

> Maturation involves the increasing acceptance of responsibility for the direction and scope of one's own life. . . . Books allow a high amount of autonomy for the child in controlling the depth, pacing, direction, ordering, quality, and complexity of individual pursuits. . . . In short, they are the single indispensable tool for fostering independent learning. (p. 39)

Reading programs for the highly above-average student should recognize that reading for pleasure is an important facet of developmental reading programs for the gifted student (Witty, 1971).

Gifted and talented students have specific needs which should be met in their total reading experiences. Shafer (1972) reported gifted are more interested in the search for meaning from what they read than are nongifted students. By age eight or nine the gifted have mastered basic reading skills and are reading for pleasure or to gain knowledge. At this point the reading program should emphasize developing a child's innate quality as a processor of

information. The psycholinguistic analysis of reading perceives the process as going from words to meaning rather than the reverse. Children learning to read utilize the same basic processes required in comprehension of speech, that is, they are seeking to "reduce uncertainty and discover regularity" (p. 10). Thus educators, Shafer stated, might ask if they ought not be providing situations in and out of school in which children may develop their own meanings.

Swiss and Olsen (1976) reported on efficient programs for superior readers in the middle grades. These programs recognize that most gifted children are proficient in basic skills and literal comprehensions. As a result, the reading programs stress the more advanced abilities of comprehending critically, appreciating literature, and learning to read creatively. Although this is most successfully achieved through individualized reading programs, group work is also suggested to improve skills in listening, speaking, and dramatization. Shafer (1972) has stated that reading is not a difficult process, but it is one of which all are capable. It may be the teaching of reading (e.g., drilling the same skills repeatedly for years) which prevents some students from reading. It is suggested that students ought to be allowed more time for reading without interruption.

Many schools tend to keep gifted students studying what they already know, for example, basal readers and required reading courses. In their attempt to reach for knowledge they are thus

inhibited and made to wait (Shafer, 1972). Cox (1981) has reported that this special group of children tends to pursue their interests more emphatically than do children of lesser abilities. It is in reading that gifted children can easily satisfy their many curiosities about the world around them. They read to gather information for special school projects, to find out more about a variety of hobbies, to explore new areas of interest, and to seek a more thorough understanding of sports and recreational pursuits.

The library is a primary source that meets many of the superior children's special needs (Farnsworth, 1981). Libraries offer freedoms for these children who often "live with pressures of many kinds" (p. 119). They may experience comfort because it is a place where intelligence is shared. Vast collections of encyclopedias are housed there which the gifted use for browsing. Added features such as chess clubs, hobby shows, and story-telling programs for younger children satisfy the gifted's needs for affiliation and relating to others, needs often neglected. Witty (1971) nas stated that extending the gifted child's interests is essential because many interests evolve into prolonged hobbies or become the foundation of lifelong pursuits or careers. The gifted disadvantaged child often requires encouragement to acquire and pursue worthwhile interests. This also may be achieved through reading.

Estes and Vaughan (1973) reported that the variable of interest has a positive effect on reading comprehension of gifted readers. In testing comprehension of fourth graders reading at or above grade

level on selections of high and low interest, the value of significant difference between the two scores was 5.90, $p<.001$. A related study by Stevens (1980) tested the effect of interest on higher, middle, and lower ability students' reading comprehension in Grades 5 and 6. The results were that topic interest was a significant factor in reading comprehension for higher ability readers; however, it was not a significant factor for readers in the middle and lower ability groups.

The gifted preschooler's ability to read has been studied by experts in the field. Terman and Oden (1947) reported that almost 50% of their gifted subjects were reading prior to entering school; 20% were reading before the age of five, 6% were reading before age four, and 1/6% were reading before age three. These findings may be compared with the results of Cassidy and Vukelich (1980). In testing four- and five-year-olds it was reported that "a relatively small percentage of the gifted preschool population (17-23%) actually starts to read before starting kindergarten" (p. 582). It was stated that, although gifted children have the necessary readiness skills and intelligence at this age, they have not yet realized the function of reading and its ability to provide them with information and enjoyment. Gifted children who enter school with the ability to read may encounter problems if their special needs are not met (Swiss & Olsen, 1976). They may become behavioral problems, show apathy, or even withdraw and lose interest in school altogether. Salzer (1984) stated that the exact relationship between early

reading ability and overall superior capacity has not been determined.

Parents of children who read early are often concerned about their children's achievements during crucial preschool years. These parents read to their children, provide them with books and materials, show a deep respect for reading, and encourage writing and spelling experiences (Witty, 1971). The homes in the Terman and Oden (1947) study were rated on the basis of necessities, size, neatness, parental conditions, and parental supervision. Sixty percent were rated superior and 30% were rated average. The home libraries were reported to have an average of 328 books which Terman stated was far more than the average for homes of that locale.

The teacher's role receives special attention in literature discussing effective reading programs for the gifted. In researching gifted advantaged and disadvantaged sixth and eighth graders, Jacks (1971) reported a list of desirable teacher traits as expressed by the students. These gifted children preferred a teacher who asked many questions, asked stimulating questions, encouraged participation to bring up controversial topics, and usually kept the classes quiet. The four most desirable teacher character traits expressed by the students were friendliness, knowledge of subject, encouragement of independence, and patience. The role of the gifted child's (reading) teacher is further described by Witty (1971). That teacher must: (a) become acquainted with literature for children, (b) work closely with parents and librarians in obtaining materials to satisfy the gifted child's needs and interests, (c) study children's anthologies,

and (d) set an example by reading widely and communicate to children an enthusiasm and pleasure in reading.

The teacher's use of such techniques as the interest inventory was suggested by Nelson and Cleland (1981). Among the desirable traits of gifted teachers was listed the ability to determine a gifted child's personality and needs. The teacher's role is viewed as one of a "facilitator of learning rather than a director of learning" (p. 416). These authors have also stated that the teacher is the "key to effective learning" in all educational programs (p. 413). Ross (1978) has reported that although the teacher cannot alter books in order to motivate students to read, he or she can increase the amount of exposure students receive to books and determine children's knowledge of selected books. The teacher who successfully promotes books is one who clearly enjoys reading and who has read books for children as well as for adults. Lacking the latter background, seeking out children's anthologies is a suggested alternative. Students need to participate in exposing themselves to books (Wendelin & Zinck, 1983). In addition to formal reports on books, these authors recommend informal sharing sessions. One source (Gitelman, 1984) has suggested using biographies with the above-average child because biographies encompass vast interest areas and stimulate the imagination.

Criteria used in selecting and grouping high ability students for effective reading programs are analyzed throughout the research. Sanacore (1981) reported instruments such as the Williams Scales for

Rating the Behavior Characteristics of Superior Students assist the educator in identifying potentially gifted and talented students. Other criteria used in selection include minimum I.Q. scores (e.g., 120) and results of standardized reading achievement tests (e.g., stanine of 9). Although homogeneous grouping of gifted and talented readers is a cause for dissention, Sanacore suggests that "certain gifted and talented readers should be grouped with students of similar abilities so that peers challenge and stimulate each other rather than taunt and demean individuals who have 'the right answer'" (p. 59). Subjects of a related study (Jacks, 1972) indicated a preference for homogeneous grouping; however, if given the choice, they would prefer independent study over any arrangement of group study.

Research of Reading Interests and Attitudes of Gifted Children

In a study of fourth, fifth, and sixth grade gifted students, Bobel (1981) reported readers' book preferences in two major categories. The preferred fiction topics listed in descending order were: humor, mysteries, adventure, animal stories, and fantasy; the least favored fiction topic was war stories. Nonfiction favorites listed in descending order were: sports or crafts/hobbies, pets, music, art, and biographies or prehistoric world; the most disliked nonfiction categories were: world problems, social studies, religion, and archaeology. The results of a comparative study (McKay, 1971) were that brights students

selected more biographies, humor, and mysteries than below-average achievers.

Terman and Oden (1947) reported that gifted subjects of their study read a much wider range of books than did the control group. Categorically, the gifted read more science, history, biography, travel, folk tales, international fiction, poetry, and drama than their nongifted peers. Adventure and mystery books were less popular with the gifted than the unselected group; emotional fiction was read far less by the gifted. The results of the follow-up study in 1945 indicated that, as young adults, the gifted's reading preferences had not altered greatly. Listed in descending order, the books most preferred by males were: literature, history (including geography, travel, biography, and current affairs), social sciences, pure sciences, and philosophy. Female preferences differed from the males' only in philosophy ranking fourth and pure science fifth. The category of literature was further divided into three categories, and both sexes rated those areas the same: (1) fiction, (2) detective novels, and (3) historical/social novels.

A recent study (Goostree, 1981) was conducted in the state of Missouri to determine the reading attitudes and interests of gifted fourth through sixth graders. It was reported that these intermediate grade children preferred the following topics (listed in order of preference): comedy, mystery, adventure, myths and legends, stories about boys and girls their age, and science fiction. Listed in order, the least favored topics were poetry, food and cooking,

music, social studies, and religion.

The preferred topics of nongifted children in the intermediate grades merit secondary interest. One set of researchers (Lauritzen & Cheves, 1974) reported that animals were the most liked subject of 7- through 12-year-olds, although this preference began to decrease at ages 11 and 12. As these children matured, interest in mysteries began to increase. Across all age levels studied, boys showed a greater interest in science, sports, and transportation. Make-believe and stories about people were consistently more popular with girls at these ages. Readers in Grades 5 through 8, samples of another study (Wendelin & Zinck, 1983), expressed an overwhelming interest in mysteries; the other preferred topics included animals, humor/comedy, adventure, love stories, sports, science fiction, and children their own age.

Variations between gifted boys' and girls' preferred reading topics have been reported. Terman and Oden (1947) stated that in both gifted and control groups boys read a greater variety of materials and more adventure than girls. Girls read five times more emotional fiction than boys, and girls were the only sex to reread the same book in a two-month period. Six years later the reading interests of the two sexes nearly paralleled earlier findings. Goostree (1981) reported significant differences in gifted boys' versus girls' reading interests. Girls were more interested in the following topics: art, biographies of women, boys/girls my age, food and cooking, different languages, music,

poetry, Black studies, travel, love/romance, and religions. Boys showed a greater preference for the following topics: applied science, prehistoric world, science, science fiction, and sports. Goostree also reported distinctions between sexes in most disliked topics. Girls' most disliked categories were: social studies, religions, world problems, science, and applied science. Boys' most disliked categories were: music, religions, food and cooking, romance/love, and poetry.

Format of reading materials is a significant factor in reading choices of intermediate readers. One author (Bobel, 1981) has reported that gifted students much prefer books (68%) to magazines (13%), comics (13%), or newspapers (5%). If given the opportunity to purchase library reading materials, these same subjects would select a variety of books, maps, and reference books over periodicals, paperbacks, or comics. Nongifted students in the same approximate grades preferred paperback books over hardcover books in a related study (Wendelin & Zinck, 1983).

Researchers have studied which persons and places influence children in their choices of reading materials. Bobel (1981) reported that gifted get most of their reading materials from public libraries, book clubs, home libraries, and school libraries in that order. Langer (1970) stated that high achievers prefer library books and think library books should be used more in the classroom. Exposure to available reading materials plays a critical role in book choices for all children. Paperback book

companies and library journal book lists reported that "books most read in 1976 by students were those from which movies or television programs had derived" (Ross, 1978, p. 398). Wendelin and Zinck (1983) reported that a majority of students would be more likely to read a book recommended by a friend (69%) than by a teacher (31%). They further stated that this pattern of peer influence increased from fifth through ninth grades.

What does research reveal about the amount of time gifted children spend in recreational reading? Terman and Oden (1947) stated that "the majority of children were inveterate readers" (p. 39) averaging 6 hours per week at age 7 and increasing to 12 hours per week at age 13. Some gifted subjects read 20 or more hours per week. Eighty-eight percent of the gifted read more than the average student while no gifted read less than their average peers. In a two-month period the average seven-year-old read 10 books, the average eleven-year-old read 15 books, and little increase was reported after age eleven. Girls read slightly more than boys in both gifted and control groups. In the follow-up study six years later, the average number of hours per week spent in general reading was 7½. Homework was cited as the primary factor for the decrease after age 14.

Another study (Bobel, 1981) of gifted fourth through sixth grade readers reported that 47% spent one to four hours per week in recreational reading; 25% spent four to seven hours per week reading. Homework was the most often stated reason for not having

enough time to read. Goostree (1981) reported that gifted fourth through sixth graders averaged four to six hours of reading per week outside of assignments; girls spent more time reading than boys.

A child's attitude toward reading plays significantly in general reading habits. One set of authors (Kennedy & Halinski, 1975) has stated that development of attitudes precedes development of interests. A student's positive attitude must exist prior to making that child a lifetime reader. Goostree (1981) reported that gifted students have a positive attitude toward reading; girls in the study exhibited a slightly more positive attitude than boys. Another gifted population (Bobel, 1981) reported consistently positive attitudes toward reading: "I feel happy when I'm reading when I want" (96%); "I enjoy reading at home" (84%); "Some time should be used for reading during summer vacation" (87%) (p. 21).

Summary of Research and Authoritative Opinion

A number of conclusions may be drawn from the preceding review of literature on gifted students and reading.

1. Prior to the 1920's very little was known about the gifted student.

2. Gifted children tend to be superior to nongifted children in physical makeup, character, and performance in learning situations.

3. The intermediate and junior high school years are periods

of great change and moral development.

4. Reading plays a vital role in the overall learning process.

5. The ability of gifted preschoolers to read and its effect on later reading may be disputed.

6. The needs of the gifted child in reading are not usually met in traditional reading programs.

7. A child's attitude toward reading affects his reading interests, and reading interests affect the child's reading habits.

8. Books and reading are generally stressed in homes of gifted.

9. The teacher is a primary factor in motivating students to read.

10. Gifted children's reading interests are more diverse than nongifted children's, and gifted read more than their nongifted peers.

11. Books (especially library books) are the preferred format of reading materials of gifted children.

12. Gifted girls exhibit slightly more positive attitudes toward reading than gifted boys, and gifted girls read more than gifted boys.

The need for further research in these areas suggests the value of the present study. The conclusions shall serve as a basis in developing the hypotheses.

CHAPTER III

Hypotheses and Operational Definitions

Hypotheses

The research is designed to obtain answers to the four primary questions which follow.

1. What attitudes do gifted and talented children have toward reading?

2. Do gifted and talented children express a preference for a particular format of reading?

3. Do gifted and talented children at different grade levels exhibit significant differences in reading interests?

4. Do gifted and talented boys and girls exhibit significant differences in reading interests?

Operational Definitions

For purposes of this study, the following operational definitions are prescriptively defined.

1. Gifted and talented children are those identified by professionally qualified persons who, by nature of outstanding abilities, are capable of high performance. These are the children who require differentiated educational programs and/or services beyond those normally provided by the regular school programs in order to realize their contributions to self and society. (Miller, 1981, p. 4)

2. Reading attitudes are "an individual's views, feelings,

values, and beliefs in the area of reading" (Ewing, 1977, p. 1).

3. Reading interests are "an individual's selection of a preference in reading topics" (Harris & Sipay, 1975, p. 512).

Summary

Chapter III contained the stated hypotheses of the present study and the operational definitions of terms pertinent to this study. The experimental design of the study will be presented in Chapter IV. Chapter V will report the results of the study, and Chapter VI will contain discussions and implications of the study.

CHAPTER IV

Experimental Design

This chapter discusses details of the experimental design procedures. Presented are a complete description of the subjects of the study, the experimental instrument and methods of administration, and the procedures utilized to analyze the data.

Subjects

The gifted and talented students selected to participate in this study were enrolled in a summer learning program whose setting was a large state university in a suburban area of north central Texas. The program, entitled Summer Adventures in Learning (S.A.I.L.), was offered at the University of Texas at Arlington; the university is located in the midcities area of Dallas and Fort Worth, a metropolitan area of approximately three million.

The S.A.I.L. Program was comprised of three individual learning situations, each of which met the needs of a particular class of students. Supervision and instruction of the S.A.I.L. Program was carried out by faculty and graduate students of the Center for Professional Teacher Education at the university. Learning opportunities were offered for students who requested tutoring in reading and language arts and who were entering Grades 2 through 6 in the following school year. A second setting was designed for

young children who were entering kindergarten or first grade in the following fall. The Talented and Gifted Program (T.A.G.) was the third program offering, and pupils enrolled in the T.A.G. section constituted this study's sample population.

Enrollment in the Talented and Gifted Program was limited to pupils who were entering fourth through ninth grades in the subsequent fall. Students who were enrolled in the T.A.G. section of the S.A.I.L. Program during the summer of 1983 ranged in age from 9 to 13 years. These pupils were chosen at random from schools in the Dallas/Fort Worth Metroplex area, and they were participating in the program for a period of approximately four weeks. The Talented and Gifted Program was "designed for pupils whose academic performance is in the top ten percent of their class or who have demonstrated superior academic potential". Pupil performance was substantiated with testing results and/or school records (S.A.I.L., 1983). Of the 41 surveys distributed 30 were completed and returned. Students who answered the questionnaire comprised the population sample and numbered 19 boys and 11 girls.

Conclusions drawn from the study are limited to the experimental subjects and the greater abstract group from which they originated. The researcher realizes the nature of educational research to apply generalizations to like subjects. Precaution is suggested to ensure practical application of the findings.

Experimental Procedures

Subjects received individual copies of the Reading Interest

Survey to complete within regular class hours during the week of July 25, 1983. A copy of the instrument is contained in Appendix B. The design of the questionnaire included simple directions eliminating the need for further instructions by the classroom supervisors.

Experimental Materials

Given the nature of the research, the subjects, and the time frame involved, a survey was selected to obtain the raw data. Because of its ease in administration and generally high accuracy, a Likert type scale was chosen as the design model for the testing apparatus. The Likert type scale consists of a list of statements, and the examinee is asked to respond to each. Five answers were provided permitting the subject to express feelings toward the statement, and the range of answers included the following: strongly agree, agree, uncertain, disagree, strongly disagree. Numerical values were assigned to each type of response yielding a quantitative representation of the subject's attitude toward the statement, thus the term "summated ratings scale" (Estes, 1971, p. 136). Estes has reported the reliability of data obtained from such a scale is highly consistent.

Students who wish to project a positive image using a Likert type scale can do so. In checking internal consistencies of signed versus anonymous scales, however, one study (Kennedy & Halinski, 1975) reported the results of the signed and unsigned groups to be

similar. Subjects of the present study were not required to sign the surveys; this information was voluntarily provided by a number of the respondents.

Part One of the instrument assessed basic attitudes toward reading using a Likert type scale. The 20 statements were randomly divided into 10 positively and 10 negatively worded formats, requiring the subject to discriminate in answering.

Part Two was comprised of 10 multiple-choice and short answer questions relative to reading backgrounds. Patterns of reading habits and material selection were observed in analyzing the responses.

Individual reading subject interests were assessed in Part Three of the questionnaire using the Likert scale. Traditional literature categories were selected because it is reported (Greenlaw & Wielan, 1979) that children tend to "classify books according to time-honored categories" (p. 433).

Analysis

The analytic procedures used in this study were individual item analysis, analysis of variance, and *t* test. Computer processing was used to manipulate the raw data. The Statistical Package for the Social Sciences, second edition, 1975, was used to analyze all statistics. Hypotheses 1 and 2 were tested using the individual item analysis procedure. Hypothesis 3 grouped subjects by grade levels and was analyzed using analysis of

variance. Subjects were grouped by sex for Hypothesis 4, and the *t* test was used to analyze the data.

The first hypothesis asked, "What attitudes do gifted and talented children have toward reading?" To answer this question, an analysis of each item on Part One of the questionnaire was conducted. The positively worded items were Questions 1, 2, 6, 9, 12, 13, 14, 15, 16, and 18. Those items negatively worded were Questions 3, 4, 5, 7, 8, 10, 11, 17, 19, and 20. By examining the absolute frequency of each of five possible answers, the researcher determined a central tendency for each item. A mean score was also reported for each of the 20 questions.

The second hypothesis asked, "Do gifted and talented children express a preference for a particular format of reading?" An individual item analysis of Questions 4 and 7 from Part Two of the questionnaire responded to this hypothesis. In Question 4 subjects were given four choices and asked to select one or write in one "other" choice. In Question 7 five choices were given, and respondents were asked to mark one or two choices with "other" answers allowed. The absolute frequency of each possible response was analyzed for Questions 4 and 7. A central tendency for each question was determined as well as relative frequency reported in percent. By comparing these scores for the two questions, the researcher determined if the subjects did favor one format of reading materials over others.

The third hypothesis asked, "Do gifted and talented children

at different grade levels exhibit significant differences in reading interests?" To respond to this hypothesis, the investigator performed an analysis of variance on data obtained in Part Three. The analysis of variance produced the standard deviation between the grade levels' mean scores on Questions 1 through 30 in Part Three.

The fourth hypothesis asked, "Do gifted and talented boys and girls exhibit significant differences in reading interests?" To respond to this hypothesis, the researcher conducted a t test on data obtained in Part Three. The t test produced the standard deviation between males' and females' mean scores for Questions 1 through 30 in Part Three.

Summary

This chapter described the subjects of the study and the experimental procedures and experimental materials used. Concise descriptions of the analyses of obtained data were also included in this chapter. Chapter V discusses the results of these analyses.

CHAPTER V

Results of the Study

The primary objectives of this study were to identify reading attitudes of academically gifted and talented children, determine their interests in particular reading formats, and report significant differences in reading interests between grade levels and between sexes. This chapter reports the results of analyses performed on the data to answer the four questions comprising the hypotheses of the study. Tables 1 through 6 present the descriptive statistics of the measures used in the study. The following chapter discusses results of the analyses.

Tests of the Hypotheses

The first hypothesis sought to identify what attitudes gifted and talented children have toward reading as indicated by their responses on Questions 1 through 20 in Part One of the questionnaire. Table 1 reports that the subjects of the study had an overall positive attitude toward reading. In 10 out of 10 positively worded statements on reading, the mean for each answer was 2.679 or lower. These results suggest that most of the subjects agreed or strongly agreed with positive statements about reading. In 9 out of 10 negatively worded statements on reading, the mean for all answers was 3.138 or higher. These results suggest that most

Table 1

Frequency and Mean Scores of Reading Attitude Responses

Item[a]	Frequency (N = 30)					M
	Strongly agree (1)	Agree (2)	Uncertain (3)	Disagree (4)	Strongly disagree (5)	
1 +	17	9	2	2	0	1.633
2 +	11	10	6	3	0	2.033
3 -	2	3	3	3	16	4.033
4 -	2	3	13	9	3	3.267
5 -	2	6	10	8	3	3.138
6 +	7	12	4	4	3	2.467
7 -	1	1	1	12	15	4.300
8 -	3	4	6	10	7	4.000
9 +	16	6	5	1	1	1.793
10 -	1	4	10	9	6	3.533
11 -	6	2	14	3	5	2.967
12 +	5	6	11	5	1	1.800
13 +	13	12	4	0	1	1.800
14 +	15	11	1	2	1	1.767
15 +	9	11	5	3	2	2.267
16 +	7	9	7	7	0	2.467
17 -	1	0	3	8	17	4.379
18 +	6	8	11	4	1	2.533
19 -	2	5	4	9	10	3.667
20 -	5	4	2	6	13	3.600

[a] + = positively worded items; - = negatively worded items

of the subjects disagreed or strongly disagreed with negative statements about reading. The exception was Item 11, "Watching an adventure on television is better than reading about it". The mean for this negatively worded statement was 2.967 seeming to indicate a slight tendency toward agreement. Further analysis, however, revealed that 14 of 30 responses were uncertain.

An examination of each item in Part One produced some obvious central tendencies in the subjects' responses. Twenty-six of 30 subjects agreed "I love to read" (Item 1). Twenty-seven of 30 subjects disagreed with the statement "Most of the books I choose are not interesting" (Item 7). Twenty-two of 29 subjects enjoyed going to the library (Item 9). Twenty-five of 30 subjects liked to read at home (Item 13). Finally, 26 of 30 indicated they liked a quiet room in which to read (Item 14).

The second hypothesis asked if academically gifted children preferred one format of reading materials over another. Table 2 reports the results of an individual item analysis of Questions 4 and 7 from Part Two of the questionnaire. Question 4 asked the subjects, "Which of the following do you like reading most? (check one". Question 7 asked, "If you could buy the reading materials for your school or home library, which of the following would you buy? (mark 1 or 2 answers)". The results suggest that a two-thirds or greater majority of the gifted and talented children prefer reading books of various nature over other formats. Further examination suggests a consistency in preferred formats other than

Table 2

Frequency and Percent Scores of Preferred Reading Formats

Format	Frequency	%
	Question 4	
Books	21	70.0
Magazines	4	13.3
Newspapers	0	0.0
Comics	4	13.3
	Question 7	
Various books	20	47.6
Paperbacks	8	19.0
Comics	5	11.9
Maps/reference books	3	7.1
Periodicals	5	11.9
Other	1	2.4

books. Both Questions 4 and 7 produced scores seeming to indicate that comics and periodicals or magazines are equally preferred after books. Newspapers and maps and reference books appear to be of little or no interest to those sampled.

The third hypothesis asked if significant differences between grade levels would be exhibited in reading interests of gifted and talented children. An analysis of variance between responses of the 30 subjects produced significant variances in the five topics listed on Table 3. Means reported in Table 4 suggest these variances between grade levels in subjects of interest. A complete listing of grade level means for topics of reading interest is provided on Table C-1 in Appendix C. Differences in total degrees of freedom between all subjects (e.g., 26, 28) resulted because not all subjects answered all questions.

Subjects in Grades 4 and 9 scored alike on Question 3. These subjects reported a significantly greater liking for archaeology ($\underline{M}$ = 2.00) than did subjects in Grade 7 ($\underline{M}$ = 4.25), $\underline{F}(5,28)$ = 3.543, $\underline{p}<.05$. Crafts and hobbies was a second topic of significant difference, of greater interest to Grade 4 subjects ($\underline{M}$ = 1.71) than to Grade 8 subjects ($\underline{M}$ = 3.50), $\underline{F}(5,28)$ = 3.239, $\underline{p}<.05$. Music was a third topic of significant difference; Grade 9 subjects ($\underline{M}$ = 1.33) preferred this topic over Grade 4 subjects ($\underline{M}$ = 3.86), $\underline{F}(5,26)$ = 3.102, $\underline{p}<.05$. The fourth topic showing significant difference was myths and fantasies; Grade 9 subjects ($\underline{M}$ = 1.33) preferred this topic more than Grade 7 subjects ($\underline{M}$ = 3.75), $\underline{F}(5,26)$ = 2.878, $\underline{p}<.05$.

Table 3

Analysis of Variance Between Grade Levels of Topics of Reading Interest

Topic	Degrees of freedom	F value	Significance of F
Archaeology	5	3.543	.016*
Crafts and hobbies	5	3.239	.023*
Music	5	3.102	.030*
Myths and fantasies	5	2.878	.039*
Prehistoric world	5	3.843	.012**

*$p < .05$. **$p < .01$.

Table 4

Grade Level Means of Topics of Reading Interest

Topic	Grade Level Mean[a]					
	4	5	6	7	8	9
Archaeology	2.00	2.86	2.75	4.25	3.67	2.00
Crafts and hobbies	1.71	2.00	2.25	3.25	3.50	2.00
Music	3.86	2.20	2.75	3.00	3.50	1.33
Myths and fantasies	1.86	1.80	2.00	3.75	2.25	1.33
Prehistoric world	1.57	2.17	2.50	4.25	2.25	2.33

[a] 1 = like very much, 2 = like, 3 = not sure, 4 = dislike, 5 = dislike very much.

Prehistoric world was the fifth topic whose interest differed significantly between grades; this topic also produced the most significant difference. Grade 4 subjects (M = 1.57) preferred this topic more than their Grade 7 peers (M = 4.25), $F(5,27)$ = 3.843, $p<.01$.

The fourth hypothesis asked if significant differences in reading interests would be exhibited between gifted and talented male and female subjects. Table 5 reports the four subject areas in which a significant difference was produced following a t-test analysis. Means reported in Table 6 illustrate differences between means. A complete listing of male and female means and grand means of reading topic interests is provided on Table D-1 in Appendix D. Differences in total degrees of freedom resulted because all respondents did not answer all questions.

Male subjects reported a greater preference for comedy/jokes (M = 1.8947) than female subjects (M = 2.9091), $t(28)$ = -2.17, $p<.05$. In a second topic, girls reported a greater preference for poetry (M = 2.3636) than boys (M = 3.5000), $t(27)$ = 2.68, $p<.01$. Boys preferred the third topic, science fiction, (M = 1.5789) more than did the girls (M = 2.9091), $t(28)$ = -2.59, $p<.05$. The fourth topic listed on Tables 5 and 6 produced the most significant differences between male and female responses. Sports were preferred more by male subjects (M = 1.8889) than by female subjects (M = 3.9091), $t(27)$ = -4.66, $p<.01$.

Table 5

T-Test Analysis Between Male and Female Subjects of Topics of Reading Interest

Topic	Degrees of freedom	t value	2-tail probability
Comedy/jokes	28	-2.17	.039*
Poetry	27	2.68	.012**
Science fiction	28	-2.59	.015*
Sports	27	-4.66	.000**

*$p<.05$. **$p<.01$.

Table 6

Male and Female Means of Topics of Reading Interest

Topic	Male mean[a]	Female mean[a]
Comedy/jokes	1.8947	2.9091
Poetry	3.5000	2.3636
Science fiction	1.5789	2.9091
Sports	1.8889	3.9091

[a] 1 = like very much, 2 = like, 3 = not sure, 4 = dislike, 5 = dislike very much.

Major Findings

The major findings of the present study are summarized below. The findings are presented as they correlate to the hypotheses of the study.

1. Gifted and talented children have positive attitudes toward reading. These attitudes appear to be observable in their reading habits at home and school.

2. Books appear to be the preferred format of reading materials of gifted and talented readers. Comics and periodicals (i.e., magazines) appear to be the second most preferred reading formats.

3. Significant differences between grade levels' reading interests were exhibited in the following categories: archaeology, crafts and hobbies, music, myths and fantasies, and prehistoric world.

4. Significant differences between males' and females' reading interests were exhibited in the following categories: comedy/jokes, poetry, science fiction, and sports.

Summary

Chapter V reported the findings from analyses of the observed data. Chapter VI discusses these results, their implications and limitations, and also offers suggestions for further research.

CHAPTER VI

Discussion and Implications of the Study

This chapter discusses the major findings of the study, their implications to education, and their limitations. Theoretical interpretations and suggestions for further research are offered.

General Discussion

The purpose of this study was to investigate attitudes of gifted and talented children in four major areas: general attitudes toward reading, preferences for a specific format of reading materials, preference by grade level of reading subjects, and preference by sex of reading subjects. Results of this study suggest that gifted and talented children in Grades 4 through 9 have a very positive attitude toward reading. Secondly, gifted children in the middle grades appear to prefer reading books; they appear to have secondary and equal interests in comics and magazines. Thirdly, gifted children in Grades 4 through 9 appear to exhibit significant differences in reading interests. Finally, the sex of the fourth through ninth grade gifted readers appears to significantly influence their reading interests.

The first major finding of the present study, that gifted and talented children appear to have very positive attitudes toward reading, is supported in results of other studies. Reading was

cited along with mathematics as the most favored subjects by gifted students in the Jacks (1971) study. Other previous research has also reported that gifted and talented students have positive attitudes toward reading (Goostree, 1981; Bobel, 1981).

This study reports that, when asked what format of reading materials gifted students prefer, 70% of the respondents chose books of various types, 13.3% chose magazines, 13.3% chose comics, and none chose newspapers. It is interesting to note how these figures correspond to the same categories in a study by Bobel (1981). Bobel reported 68% preferred books, 13% preferred magazines, 13% preferred comics, and 5% preferred newspapers. Some differences can be observed in examining results of the question "If you could buy the reading materials for your school or home library, which of the following would you buy?". Subjects of the present study expressed the following preferences (listed in descending order): various books, paperbacks, comics and periodicals, maps or reference books, and others. Subjects of the Bobel study indicated their format preferences as follows (listed in descending order): various books, books/maps/reference books, periodicals, paperbacks, and comics. Differences in the two results may be explained by the wording of "books/maps/reference books" in the Bobel study. Subjects of both studies consistently reported various books as their preferred format choices; the addition of the word "books" to that response in Bobel's study may account for its higher ranking.

The present study reports significant differences between grade levels' reading interests in the following categories: archaeology, crafts and hobbies, music, myths and fantasies, and prehistoric world. A related study (Goostree, 1981) reported the significance of grade level to topics of interest. Means in each category were rank ordered for Grades 4, 5, and 6; the results were closely similar for all three grade levels. Grades 5 and 6 top five choices were identical and differed only in rank order. Grade 4 chose four of the same five topics, and these topics differed from those of Grades 5 and 6 in rank order. Goostree reported that grade level means for each of the topics were similar to grand means for the entire sample. The differences in results of the present study and the Goostree study may be explained by variances in sample size and range of ages. Goostree's sample size exceeded 300 and included three grade levels; the present study numbered 30 subjects and included six grade levels.

The present study reports that the subjects' sex was a significant factor in 4 of 30 topics of interests. This finding differs from results of the Goostree (1981) study; Goostree reported significant differences between boys' and girls' choices in 16 of 31 topics. Three of the 4 topics in this study that showed significant differences (poetry, science fiction, sports) were among the 16 topics showing significant differences in the Goostree research. Sample size may account for the discrepancies.

These findings have several implications to education. To plan

and promote a successful program for the gifted and talented child, educators need to identify this type of learner's particular interests which are not being serviced by topics in the regular curriculum. A major suggestion offered (Nelson & Cleland, 1981) was to use the gifted child's "natural curiosity" as a foundation for learning opportunities and relate these opportunities to that child's own needs and interests (p. 416). Witty (1971) stated that the academically gifted should be allowed to explore a wide range of reading materials such as biographies, histories, poetry, and humor. Witty further stated that this type of learner requires adult assistance in selecting books that satisfy present interests as well as develop new interests. Truly effective professionals seek to obtain maximum performance from their students in all areas. Stevens (1980) suggested that educators have often settled for above-average achievement of higher ability students, despite the fact that such achievement may fall short of their potential. Stevens further suggested that higher interest reading materials may be required to achieve maximum reading performance.

Educators are cautioned, however, against using students' interests as the sole criteria for selecting content of reading programs. One expert (Moller, 1984) reported that such a method fails to expand students' interests or refine their tastes. Moller has suggested that gifted students be permitted to explore vast subject areas and new, challenging reading materials to perfect their reading skills. The key, it seems, lies in a harmonious

blend of building on present interests of the academically gifted reader while exposing the individual to unfamiliar and challenging reading materials.

Teachers of the gifted and talented play a vital role in motivating and guiding this special learner to reach optimum success in reading. A recent survey (Dole & Adams, 1983) reported that 71% of reading and/or gifted teachers felt that they were ineffective as a group in teaching reading to the gifted. This same group stated that they would support graduate level coursework on methods of teaching the gifted reader. Such findings certainly merit consideration by university teacher education programs. Baskin and Harris (1980) have stated that gifted children, despite their special abilities, lack experience and discrimination in selecting quality reading materials. Teachers and librarians have both adult judgment and professional tools such as selection guides and reviewing services to help the superior student choose excellent books and literature over those of a sensational or inferior quality. Terman and Oden (1951/1972) suggested that, once gifted children have acquired a desire for reading books, they will eventually begin to select a higher quality of books over a lesser quality. The gifted may even show a preference for reading materials normally selected by older children. Such choices are acceptable but must be elicited rather than forced on the individual.

The library serves as the primary institution in which parents may take part in their gifted child's learning process (Farnsworth,

1981). This study suggests that gifted children normally possess positive attitudes toward books. The role of supportive parents is to share in their children's love of books, guide the children in selecting quality materials, and provide a wealth of various reading materials. Parents can also teach their superior children to identify fact from opinion in discussing selections from newspapers and magazines. Finally, librarians and teachers should survey the higher ability students to determine their preferred reading topics and use the results of the surveys in selecting new library and classroom materials.

Limitations

Several limitations which become evident in the discussion of this study are treated below.

Firstly, the size of the research sample was comparatively small, totaling only 30 subjects. A variance of one number in a given frequency resulted in major differences when reported in percentages, means, or standard deviations. In addition, with a frequency change of one number, differences in inferential statistics become dramatic when an analysis of variance or a *t* test is applied to such a small population.

Secondly, a more equal number of male and female subjects would have been more desirable when significant differences by sex are being investigated. This population sample of 30 subjects numbered 19 males and 11 females; it would have ideally contained

15 of each sex. The same limitation may be applied to the unequal number of respondents in each of the six grades analyzed. The number of subjects at each grade level varied from a maximum of eight subjects in Grade 4 to a minimum of three subjects in Grade 9. The researcher is aware of validity issues based on these unequivalent numbers.

Lastly, any conclusions made from this study must necessarily consider the experimental subjects and the larger theoretical group from which they were chosen. It cannot be assumed that all academically gifted children enjoy and participate in summer learning programs. The term gifted and talented does not predispose a child to be highly motivated and possess positive attitudes toward the learning environment. It must be remembered that the subjects of this study willingly participated in a program outside of their regular school requirements.

Suggestions for Further Research

Extended research into the area of reading attitudes and interests of gifted and talented children is suggested by the results of the present study. In addition to simple replications of this study, the author suggests several related problems worthy of further research.

A comparative study of reading attitudes and interests of gifted readers from differing sections of the nation might reveal interesting results for educators. A further extension studying

the reading characteristics of children of contrasting nations and cultural backgrounds may also provide valuable results.

Long-term research conducted on a particular group of gifted students is a second direction which may warrant study. Follow-up studies which reveal changes in reading attitudes and interests might explain what impact specific reading programs and curriculums have on the gifted child over time.

A third problem which may deserve investigation is what role the I.Q. of an individual learner has on reading preferences. Such a study would require grouping gifted subjects by I.Q. ranges. An analysis of the varying reading interests between groups could produce worthwhile information about the relationship between intelligence and reading interests.

Concluding Statement

As a teacher of reading who supports educational opportunities for gifted and talented children, the author believes that the subject of reading and programs for the gifted student merit professional consideration. Previous research is outlined in this study, and present results are offered for examination. It is left to the reader to determine the value of both past and present research.

The academically gifted child is equal to all children in deserving individual consideration and treatment. The overwhelming importance of reading has already been suggested and ought to

pervade the entire scope of education. Professional educators are individually responsible for studying the literature available and formulating their own conclusions. This study serves as but one inquiry into the reading preferences of this most unique group of learners.

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Appendix A

July 1983

Dear Gifted and Talented Teacher,

I am completing work on my Master of Arts Degree with an Emphasis in Reading. Under the supervision of Dr. Gary Ryan at the University of Texas at Arlington, I am writing my scholarly paper on the topic of reading interests of gifted and talented students.

I am enclosing copies of a reading interest survey. The survey serves as my primary instrument in collecting data for my study. What I am asking you to do is to distribute to each of your students a copy and allow ample time for completion.

When all of your students have completed the survey, please return all copies to Dr. Ryan. I would like to have all surveys returned by Thursday, July 28.

Thank you for your help,

Barbara R. Link

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Appendix B

READING INTEREST SURVEY

Dear Student,

This is a survey to find out what your reading interests are. Please answer all questions completely. Thank you for your help.

Age____ Grade (this fall)____ Birthdate__/__/__ Boy Girl (circle one)

PART ONE. READING ATTITUDES

These questions will show how you feel about reading in general. After you have read each statement, mark the answer that best tells how you feel by circling the number.

1 = Strongly Agree (SA) 2 = Agree (A) 3 = Uncertain (U) 4 = Disagree (D) 5 = Strongly Disagree (SD)

		SA	A	U	D	SD
1.	I love to read.....	1	2	3	4	5
2.	When I have free time at school I often read.....	1	2	3	4	5
3.	I seldom have a book in my room at home.....	1	2	3	4	5
4.	At home I would rather watch television than read.....	1	2	3	4	5
5.	At home I would rather play than read.....	1	2	3	4	5
6.	Things I learn about in school very often cause me to read about that subject on my own.....	1	2	3	4	5
7.	Most of the books I choose are not interesting.....	1	2	3	4	5
8.	Reading is work.....	1	2	3	4	5
9.	I enjoy going to the library.....	1	2	3	4	5
10.	I often start books but do not finish them.....	1	2	3	4	5
11.	Watching an adventure on television is better than reading about it.....	1	2	3	4	5
12.	Spending money on books is a good idea.....	1	2	3	4	5
13.	I enjoy reading at home.....	1	2	3	4	5
14.	I like the room to be quiet so than I can read.....	1	2	3	4	5
15.	Books make good gifts.....	1	2	3	4	5
16.	I enjoy reading as a subject in school.....	1	2	3	4	5
17.	Reading is boring.....	1	2	3	4	5
18.	I wish I had more time during the day to read.....	1	2	3	4	5
19.	I seldom read except when I have an assignment.....	1	2	3	4	5
20.	There are few books which are really interesting.....	1	2	3	4	5

PART TWO. READING BACKGROUND

1. About how many hours each week do you spend reading what you want to read (not including assigmnments)?

___ less than 1 hour
___ 1-4 hours
___ 4-7 hours
___ 7-10 hours
___ 10 or more hours

2. Do you have enough time for reading? yes ___ no ___
If not, please explain why._____

3. Do you have a favorite author? yes ___ no ___
If yes, who?_____

4. Which of the following do you like reading most? (check one)

___books ___magazines ___newspapers ___comics

5. Do you belong to the public library? yes ___ no ___
If yes, how often do you go?

___ more than once a week
___ once a week
___ every 2 weeks
___ once a month
___ a couple time a year
___ never

6. Where do you get most of your reading materials? (Rank in order 1-3: 1 = first choice, 2 =second choice, 3 = third choice)

___ public library
___ school library
___ friends
___ book club
___ book store
___ classroom library
___ home library
___ gift
___ grocery/convenience store

7. If you could buy the reading materials for your school or home library, which of the following would you buy? (mark 1 or 2 answers)

___ various books
___ paperbacks
___ comics
___ maps and reference books
___ periodicals (magazines, newspapers)
___ other:_____

8. Do you discuss what you read with your parents? yes ___ no ___

9. Do your parents help you in choosing your reading materials? ___ yes ___ no

10. Who would you like to help you find something to read or to recommend something to read? (mark as many answers as needed)

___ friend
___ parents
___ teacher
___ brother/sister
___ librarian
___ none (I would rather do it myself)

PART THREE. FAVORITE READING SUBJECTS

Please show how you feel about these reading topics by circling the number.

1 = like very much (++) 2 = like (+) 3 = not sure (0) 4 = dislike (-) 5 = dislike very much (--)

How do you feel about reading about:	++	+	0	-	--
1. adventures	1	2	3	4	5
2. animals	1	2	3	4	5
3. archaeology (exploring ancient times & cities)	1	2	3	4	5
4. art	1	2	3	4	5
5. biographies of men	1	2	3	4	5
6. biographies of women	1	2	3	4	5
7. boys/girls my age	1	2	3	4	5
8. comedy/jokes	1	2	3	4	5
9. crafts and hobbies	1	2	3	4	5
10. famous people	1	2	3	4	5
11. folklore and legends	1	2	3	4	5
12. food and cooking	1	2	3	4	5
13. history	1	2	3	4	5
14. human body/health	1	2	3	4	5
15. foreign languages	1	2	3	4	5
16. music	1	2	3	4	5
17. mysteries	1	2	3	4	5
18. myths and fantasies	1	2	3	4	5
19. nature study (insects, birds, animals)	1	2	3	4	5
20. poetry	1	2	3	4	5
21. prehistoric world	1	2	3	4	5
22. religions	1	2	3	4	5
23. romance/love	1	2	3	4	5
24. science	1	2	3	4	5
25. science fiction	1	2	3	4	5
26. sports	1	2	3	4	5
27. technology (engines, machines, space, etc.)	1	2	3	4	5
28. travel to other lands	1	2	3	4	5
29. social studies (governments, cultures)	1	2	3	4	5
30. world problems (war, poverty, etc.)	1	2	3	4	5

Appendix C

Table C-1

Grade Level Means for Topics of Reading Interest

Topic	Grade level mean					
	4	5	6	7	8	9
Adventures	1.63	1.57	1.50	2.00	2.33	1.33
Animals	1.25	2.00	2.50	2.25	1.67	1.67
Archaeology	2.00	2.86	2.75	4.25	3.67	2.00
Art	2.38	2.14	2.50	3.25	2.67	3.0
Biographies of men	3.57	3.14	3.25	3.75	3.50	3.00
Biographies of women	3.29	3.14	3.25	3.25	3.75	2.33
Boys/girls my age	2.71	2.86	2.75	3.50	3.00	3.00
Comedy/jokes	1.57	2.14	2.00	3.00	2.75	3.33
Crafts and hobbies	1.71	2.00	2.25	3.25	3.50	2.00
Famous people	2.13	2.40	2.50	3.25	3.25	2.00
Folklore and legends	2.63	2.20	2.50	3.00	3.25	1.67
Food and cooking	3.38	3.00	3.50	3.50	4.25	5.00
History	2.13	2.00	2.75	3.75	3.25	2.33
Human body/health	3.50	2.20	3.00	3.25	4.00	2.00
Foreign languages	3.29	2.60	2.75	3.50	2.75	2.33
Music	3.86	2.20	2.75	3.00	3.50	1.33
Mysteries	1.57	2.20	1.75	2.25	2.50	2.33
Myths and fantasies	1.86	1.80	2.00	3.75	2.25	1.33
Nature study	2.00	1.80	2.25	3.75	3.00	2.67
Poetry	3.00	2.50	3.25	4.00	3.50	2.00
Prehistoric world	1.57	2.17	2.50	4.25	2.25	2.33
Religions	3.57	3.00	3.50	3.50	3.75	3.33
Romance/love	3.71	3.17	3.50	3.75	3.50	4.67
Science	1.86	3.17	1.75	3.25	2.25	1.00
Science fiction	2.14	2.29	1.50	2.75	1.25	2.33
Sports	2.14	2.43	2.50	2.25	3.25	4.33
Technology	2.86	2.14	2.00	3.50	1.50	1.67
Travel to other lands	2.43	2.57	2.75	3.00	3.75	2.33
Social studies	3.71	2.86	3.00	4.50	4.00	2.67
World problems	3.50	3.00	3.75	4.50	2.75	2.00

Appendix D

Table D-1

Male/Female Means and Grand Means for Topics of Reading Interest

Topic	Male mean	Female mean	Grand mean
Adventures	1.5263	2.0000	1.700
Animals	2.0000	1.6364	1.867
Archaeology	2.7895	2.8182	2.800
Art	2.7895	2.3636	2.633
Biographies of men	3.1111	3.8182	3.379
Biographies of women	3.3684	3.1818	3.300
Boys/girls my age	3.0000	2.9091	2.967
Comedy/jokes	1.8947	2.9091	2.267
Crafts and hobbies	2.1579	2.5455	2.300
Famous people	2.2632	3.0000	2.533
Folklore and legends	2.4211	2.8182	2.567
Food and cooking	3.7895	3.3636	3.633
History	2.5263	3.0000	2.700
Human body/health	3.0556	3.1000	3.071
Foreign languages	3.1053	2.5455	2.900
Music	3.0526	2.8000	2.966
Mysteries	2.1053	2.0000	2.067
Myths and fantasies	2.0588	2.3636	2.179
Nature study	2.5789	2.3000	2.483
Poetry	3.5000	2.3636	3.069
Prehistoric world	2.4737	2.3000	2.414
Religions	3.5789	3.1818	3.433
Romance/love	3.5789	3.8182	3.667
Science	2.2222	2.4000	2.286
Science fiction	1.5789	2.9091	2.067
Sports	1.8889	3.9091	2.655
Technology	2.1053	3.0000	2.433
Travel to other lands	2.7368	2.9091	2.800
Social studies	3.3684	3.5455	3.433
World problems	3.3158	3.2727	3.300